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Ball, Thurmond Duel On State Censorship

Undersecretary of State Ball and Senator Thurmond, Democrat of South Carolina, waged a duel of words today over the State Department's censorship of speeches.

The occasion was a return engagement by Mr. Ball before a Special Armed Services subcommittee investigating charges that defense leaders have been "muzzled" in warning about the menace of communism.

With Senator Thurmond repeatedly voicing disagreement, Mr. Ball said the department's censors, with some exceptions, had "performed this delicate and sensitive responsibility with perception and judgment."

The Undersecretary specifically rejected any suggestion that the State Department has sought to discourage the use of the word "victory" and that this "reflects an ideological attitude of the department."

Pained by Explanation

In one such case Mr. Ball found himself pained not by the deletion of the word "victory" but by the explanation given for it by the State Department in a report submitted to the subcommittee last March 29.

In the speech in question the phrase "defeat of Communist aggression" had been substituted for the word "victory." The department's explanation to the subcommittee said the word "victory" has "a militaristic and aggressive ring" and "also implies an 'all-or-nothing' approach leaving no room for accommodation."

In an opening statement Mr. Ball said the explanation was "inartistically worded." He later described it as "fatuous, foolish, inarticulate, and inaccurate," and said, "I don't see why it was put in there."

Senator Thurmond said such words as "victory" were deleted from many speeches with the explanation that the use of such terms left no room for "accommodation."

Sees "No-Win" Policy

In a long series of statements prefacing his questions, the South Carolina Senator contended that such changes represented a "no-win" policy, saying that an "all or nothing" approach as expressed in many of the speeches apparently was inconsistent with State Department policy.

Senator Thurmond carried the battle of words outside the

he squirmed terribly and I don't think he was forthright."

Senator Thurmond's questions involving the State Department's position with regard to Laos became so detailed that Chairman Stennis, Democrat of Mississippi, lifted a warning voice against discussing such matters in a public hearing.

"We don't help the cause of the United States by discussing what we're going to do in Laos," Senator Stennis said. He said he had heard discussions at the "highest possible level," including briefings by the Central Intelligence Agency, about the Laotian situation and said he was "seriously in doubt" in pursuing the matter except in a closed meeting.

Topic Called Sensitive

Mr. Ball referred to the situation in Laos as having "peculiar sensitivity" and said "only a minimum should be said in an open session."

The matter was passed over for a closed meeting, with Senator Thurmond pressing on to other examples of the department's changes and deletions in speeches.

The South Carolina Senator touched on a proposed 1960 speech by Gen. Thomas S. Power, commander of the Strategic Air Command, discussing the destructiveness of a nuclear war. Mr. Ball said he felt the speech would have been "contrary to our interests" and that it was "very desirable" that Gen. Power should not deliver it.

Senator Thurmond soon

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